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ABSTRACT

This survey of 130 schools of the Kentucky High School Speech League was designed to develop a profile of the Kentucky forensics coach. The survey consisted of nine basic questions, including education, Kentucky residency, experience, salary, class load, extra responsibilities, extent of the forensic and dramatic programs, and school and individual membership in professional societies. Results revealed the typical Kentucky speech coach did not compare favorably with his counterparts throughout the country. Less than half had their master's degree and only 42 percent had the equivalent of a speech minor. Furthermore, the coach was usually reared in Kentucky educational system and had deep roots and family ties in the state. The average coach seemed dedicated yet hampered by relative lack of recognition by state and local administrators of the importance of speech to their school program. Most coaches had little support and were severely taxed to attend five tournaments a year. Finally, only every other coach was a member of any professional speech organization. (HOD)

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A Profile of The Kentucky High School Speech League Coach

Bill DeArmond*

Little research has been conducted in the area of speech education in Kentucky on the secondary school level. This survey was not intended to be a complete overview of the state's program. It was designed to develop a profile of the Kentucky forensics coach and in so doing revealed many interesting aspects of the entire program.

METHOD AND RESPONSE

This survey was conducted over a six-week period during the months of February and March, 1973. A sample of 130 schools of the Kentucky High School Speech League was drawn including all 114 registered high schools and 16 of the 21 listed in the junior high division.[1] Of the 130 questionnaires mailed, 60 were returned for a rate of 46%. It is felt that while the percentage is not half the total number it is a significant sample and the returns are valid.

A breakdown of returns by region reveals:

REGION	SENT	RETURNED	RATE
Bowling Green	19	16	.84
Covington	11	3	.27
Henderson	10	5	.50
Hindman	8	0	.00
Louisville	20	8	.40
Middlesboro	10	4	.40
Morehead	11	4	.36
Murray	13	8	.62
Pikeville	8	2	.25
Richmond	20	10	.50
Total	130	60	.46

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The unusually high rate of return for the Bowling Green region can be attributed to a number of factors, the main reason being that it was the home region of the survey institute with more personal contact and knowledge. The regions of least return also proved to be the regions of least activity.

RESULTS

The survey consisted of nine basic questions including education, Kentucky residency, experience, salary, class load, extra responsibilities, extent of the forensic and dramatic programs, school and individual membership in professional societies.

I. Education

Rank III (B. A.): All 60 teachers reported a minimum of a B. A. Degree, yet only 25 (42%) reported the minimum number of hours for a speech or theatre minor; 25 reported their main area outside of speech and 10 made no response. Of those who reported the institution that conferred their degree, 35 respondents received their B. A. from a Kentucky college or university.

Rank II (M. A.): Only 24 of the 60 reported an M. A. Degree and of those only 15 (62.5%) were in speech; 14 of the 24 degrees were received in Kentucky.

II. Kentucky Residency Table:

More than 20 years	49
16–20 years	0
11–20 years	4
6–10 years	3
3–5 years	3
1–2 years	1

III. Teaching Experience

Of the 60 teachers there was a total of 488 years experience (440 in Kentucky) or an average of 8.2 years per teacher. The highest average per region was Middlesboro with 19.5; the lowest was Henderson with 4.2.

However, of the 488 total teaching years only 279 spent as a forensics coach (261 in Kentucky) for an average of only 4.65 per teacher in the KHSSL. The range was 1 to 20 years with the most experienced region falling to Louisville at 5.5 and the least experienced being the Covington region at 2.6.

IV. Salary

There were a number of problems that obscured these results: most of the respondants were well under the minimums for starting and present salaries, some were "non-salaried" and the average salary ranges are established by local school boards.

The primary area of interest was the extra compensation above the base pay given to teachers for forensics work. All 60 coaches responded, but only 22 (37%) indicated they received any extra "pro-pay" with the following breakdown:

$600–700	1
$500–600	3
$400–500	3
$300–400	2
$200–300	5
$100–200	8

A compensation breakdown by region reveals:

REGION	YES	NO	RATE
Bowling Green	6	10	.38
Covington	1	2	.33
Henderson	3	2	.60
Louisville	4	4	.50
Middlesboro	1	3	.25
Morehead	0	4	.00
Murry	4	4	.50
Pikeville	1	1	.50
Richmond	2	7	.22
Totals	22	38	.37

V. Class Load

The disparity of answers all but invalidates most of these results. The desired response was the number of hour periods taught in speech and dramatics and other subjects *per week*. Few responded fully, those who did either indicated the number of classes taught per day or failed to list the unrelated subjects taught. Another problem arose from the difference in class systems since some schools are on "phase elective" and respondents were unsure as to how to answer the question.

Of the 50 who did answer the question, 27 said that they taught some subject other than speech or dramatics.

VI. Responsibilities

Coaches were asked to indicate the activities that fell under their area of responsibility. Exactly half (30) said they had a duty other than speech and dramatics; five of these had two extra responsibilities.

The table follows:

Forensics	58	Class Sponsor	5
Dramatics	46	Newspaper	3
Clubs	9	Cheerleader	2
Athletics	5	Other	6
Yearbook	5		

VII. Extent of Program in 1971–72

This is the largest area with two divisions and twelve sections.

School Enrollment–Coaches were adked to indicate the approximate school enrollment which totaled 50,700 or an average of 874 for 58 schools. The range was from 200 to 2,750. The largest per-school region was Louisville with 1,328 pupils and the smallest, Murray, at 486.

Other Coaches–Coaches were asked if there were any additional teachers aiding their total program. There were 30 extra helpers from 22 schools.

Students in Speech–Coaches were asked to give the total number of students involved in their forensics and speech program. A total of 3,515 students were working in 58 programs or an average of 60.6 per school. The range was from 8 to 400. The two largest regions were Henderson (102) and Richmond (86.5) and the smallest was Louisville with only 32.5.

Students in Dramatics–Coaches were asked to give the total number of students involved in their entire dramatics program. A total of 2,167 students were involved in 54 programs or an average of 40 per school. The range was from zero to 250. The two largest regions were Covington (105) and Henderson (104) with the two smallest being Murray (17.4) and Middlesboro (18).

One-Act Plays–A total of 50 one-act plays were presented, 17 of these at the Regional Drama Festival.

NOTE: PAGE 11 of this document is an advertisement and is not in any way relevant to the document.

Readers Theatre–Only 16 were presented with the largest number in the Richmond (5) and Henderson (4) areas.

Full-Length Plays–A total of 47 were presented with emphasis in the Bowling Green (13) and Richmond (8) Regions.

Competitive Speech Tournaments–During the 1971–72 school year, the 60 survey schools attended 335 competitive speech tournaments for an average of 5.6 per school. The range was from zero to 28. The most active region was Bowling Green (8.45) with the least active a tie between Covington and Pikeville at 2.0.

Non-Competitive Speech Festivals–During the survey year, schools only participated in 18 speech festivals.

Participation in Regional and State Tournaments–

Regional Speech and Debate (KHSSL)	Yes 50	No 10
Regional Drama Festival (KHSSL)	Yes 17	No 20
State National Forensic League	Yes 26	No 30

VIII. School Memberships–All 60 were members of the KHSSL, 16 belonged to the National Forensics League and only 5 held membership in the National Thespian Society.

IX. Individual Memberships–

KEA	45
NEA	43
KACA	17
KCTE	7

DISCUSSION

I. Education

A survey of 507 NFL coaches throughout the country in 1964 revealed the 64% had received a masters as their highest degree and that of all degrees earned by the coaches 55% were in speech.[2] A later national survey in 1970 of 306 NFL coaches revealed that 63% had the equavalent of a speech minor.[3] This would indicate a rise in formal speech training nationwide. For example, in the Michigan school system for the year 1965–66, 75% of all speech teachers had at least a speech minor;[4] yet an Ohio survey for 1967–68 only showed 63%;[5] while a Washington state survey for 1968–69 revealed that 82% of all forensics coaches had speech training.[6] In Kentucky, however, the average was only 42% with a speech or theatre minor. This is certainly well off the national average, but not nearly as severe as the situation existing in Massachusetts. A Massachusetts survey taken in 1969 revealed that only 25% of secondary faculty members teaching speech courses had the minimum of a speech minor,[7] while a study in Kentucky done the same year revealed that the average hours of speech course work for their speech teachers was 16.8%.[8] On the advanced level, only 20% of those with a Master's in Massachusetts earned it in speech compared to 62.5% for Kentucky.[9] However, the percentages of M. A.'s as the highest degree in Kentucky of 40% was 24% below the national average in 1964.

Of the returns, 12 of the 24 B. A.'s and 6 of the 15 M. A.'s were received from a Kentucky institution after 1966. A check with National Center for Educational Studies reveals that in the four academic years from 1966–70, 372 B. A.'s and 11 M. A.'s were earned in Speech and Dramatic Art in Kentucky.[10] The obvious question appears–"What has become of the tremendous number of sutdents with speech degrees?" It is possible that some are teaching in an unrelated field. It is also possible that others have turned to professionally related fields other than education. Since 174 of the 383 degrees were earned by women, it is probable that many have married and turned to family concerns rather than to public education.[11] It is also highly probable that some may have continued their education or deserted the state for better employment considerations.

II. Kentucky Residency

Results reveal that the average coach in Kentucky is not an "outsider," but one who is a long-term native; who was born here, educated here and to whom family ties are more attractive than pay or working conditions.

III. Experience

Since there is a difference of 3.5 years in Kentucky between teaching experience and experience as a forensics coach, we might assume that most schools do not hire a speech coach, but let a program grow out of areas other than speech.

The 1964 Klopf and Rives Survey determined that the average number of years the forensics director has taught to be 10.4 compared to this Kentucky survey of 8.2.[12] The same survey indicated the average experience as forensics coach to be 7.6 years compared to the Kentucky average of only 4.65.[13]

It will not surprise anyone to learn that the South is the poorest area in educational expenditures for both students and teachers. The *KEA Research Bulletin* of May, 1972, ranks Kentucky 46th among the 50 states in average salaries of secondary school teachers, 8th among the 8 bordering states and 9th of the 12 southeastern states.[14] Kentucky's average pay in 1970–71 of $7,445 was $2,123 below the national average, while by 1971–72 the gap had increased to $2,384.[15] During these same two years the average for the highest state Alaska increased $464 and for the lowest Mississippi $516.[16] The latest report just released drops Kentucky to 47th among all states with an average of $7,825 or $2,289 off the national average of $10,114.[17]

Since a coach's base pay is so low, it would be reasonable to assume that they would receive some added compensation in their paycheck. This, unfortunately, does not appear to be the case.

In 1964, 64% of the NFL coaches received approximately $300 additional remuneration for acting as forensics coach.[18] By 1970, this figure had increased to 79.4%.[19] A Washington state study revealed that 61% of all speech coaches received extra compensation as well as 78% of the drama directors, or a total of 70% for all extra-cirrucular activities.[20]

In Kentucky only 37% received any additional pay which averaged less than $300. The picture improves greatly when the figures are limited to only NFL schools with 64% getting an average of $400 extra. Other than this there was no visible rationale for some receiving this extra money. Schools with a small enrollment and a small program were just as likely to have their teachers compensated for forensics as were larger schools and programs. Teaching experience and class load also seemed to show no correlation to additional pay.

V. Class Load

The findings, though only tentative, seem to reflect the results of the Klopf and Rives survey: speech only, 41%; no speech, 24%; speech in combination with another area, 35%.[21] It should be noted that these figures are for 1964.

VI. Extra Responsibilities

Practically all of the coaches who handle the forensic program are also required to direct dramatics. Half of these

must also take on a third duty and five more must be responsible for a total of four extra activities other than normal class work. As most coaches will readily agree, their time is severely limited and it is impossible to develop an effective forensic program and be responsible for other extraneous duties.

VII. Program

The 1964 survey revealed that 38% of the speech coaches had at least one additional assistant.[22] The 1973 Kentucky survey also reflects this figure, however, it must be cautioned that nine years fall between the two statistics. There was no noticable relationship between enrollment and the number of extra coaches. A school with 200 students had two extra helpers while schools with 17,000 and 18,000 had none.

The 1964 survey also showed that forensic programs involved an average of 103 students;[23] while the survey of Kentucky schools merely 60.6. Some Kentucky schools had fairly balanced programs with nearly the same number of students involved in dramatics as in speech. Others show a heavy concentration in speech (360–0, 125–0, 450–0, 120–0); while still others shift the emphasis to dramatics (100–50, total student participation in both areas were Henderson (206) and Covington (167.5); while the two lowest regions were Pikeville (58.5) and Middlesboro (54.75). It should be noted that the totals do not necessarily reflect different individuals since many students participate in both areas.

Combining the number of one-act, readers theatre and full-length plays reveals only 113 productions or 1.88 plays per school. The most productive regions were Henderson (3.8) and Covington (3.0); while the least productive were Louisville (1.1) and Middlesboro (1.0). An interesting facet of this question is that the Bowling Green region had the largest total productions at 24, yet had one of the lowest student involvement rates in dramatics at 29.

The 1970 NFL survey showed that the average number of tournaments attended that year by all schools was 15.[24] The Kentucky survey reflected a low 5.6 attendance, however, when limited to only NFL schools the figure did rise to 12.4.

The only region that showed even a passing interest in the non-competitive speech festival was Richmond with three different schools attending four festivals.

Ten members of the KHSSL did not participate in the League's Regional Speech and Debate Tournament, nor did they attend more than a handful of regular tournaments. Less than 30% of the survey schools entered the Regional Drama Festival for that year.

VIII. School Membership

Less than 27% of the KHSSL schools hold dual membership in the NFL, although this is an increase from the 20.4% figure in 1969.[25] One possible reason for non-participation could be the fact that the NFL is more restrictive in its rules, providing for less total participation with a concentration on debate and forensics to the extent of discouraging development of competitive oral interpretation.

Only 8% of the survey schools were members of the National Thespian Society, well down from the 28.6% who were members in 1969.[26] The only regions to have more than two members were Henderson and Morehead.

IX. Individual Membership

Only 28% were members of the Kentucky Association of Communication Arts, although this is an increase over the 17% figure in 1969.[27] Other than this small number, coaches did not hold membership in any other professional group.

A RESULTS PROFILE

Many characteristics of the Kentucky High School Speech League Coach has been brought out and, unfortunately, the typical coach does not compart favorably with his counterpart throughout the country. Less than half have their Master's Degree and only 42% have the equavalent of a speech minor. The coach is a person reared in the Kentucky educational system and has deep roots and family ties in the state; which has, to some extent, helped to perpetuate problems inherent in that system.

The average coach seems dedicated yet hampered by the relative lack of recognition by state and local administrators of the importance of speech to their school program. Most coaches are overworked and underpaid. They have little support and are severely taxed to attend five tournaments a year. Finally, only every other coach is a member of any professional speech organization.

CONCLUSION

Kentucky has been viewed and found wanting in almost every area of forensic education. Compared to national surveys, Kentucky's programs have fallen far behind.

The writer's survey also revealed the fact that two previous studies of NFL schools are not valid yardsticks for use when considereing a state's total speech program, since NFL schools are, by their very nature, already well-established and supported.

EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Speech must be recognized as a prerequisite for a well-balanced high school curriculum. Clark and Leigh reported that many speech teachers responding to their survey said that "some of their difficulties occur as a result of a lack of administrative support and enthusiasm for the speech program."[28] The advantages of an educational and co-curricular program in forensics and dramatics must be realized by all professional educators in the state before the status of Kentucky's speech program can improve.

Dr. J. W. Patterson felt there were two main reasons why speech held such a low position in Kentucky. "First, it was recognized that many educators still thought of 'speech' as elocution or voice expression–Second, it was also recognized that many educators and much of the public thought that Kentucky students received this needed training in oral communication in the English class."[29]

As Clark and Leigh concluded, "If speech is to assume its proper role in the liberal arts curriculum, then greater support and effort must be given to its development."[30]

2. If speech is then to be given its proper recognition all speech programs, both classroom and co-curricular, must be brought under the supervision of qualified directors. Kentucky law requires that a teacher must have at least a minor in any area he is teaching. This rule is seldom followed in many elective subjects, most notably speech. As was mentioned earlier, surveys in Kentucky revealed that less than half of all speech teachers have at least a minor.

3. The salary of all Kentucky teachers must be increased by a minimum of 20% just to bring wage scales up to a par that can at best be called "below average". This, unfortunately, cannot and will not come about. There is some chance

that there will be some increase though not enough. Two independant studies by citizen's groups have recommended substantial increases in teacher pay. "The committees suggested a composite scale that would raise state support for a beginning teacher's salary from the current $5,860 a year to $7,369. A teacher with a bachelor's degree and maximum experience would be raised from $7,370 to $9,884. The Citizens Advisory Council had recommended raising teacher pay to the average of that paid in the seven surrounding states, and a teachers association proposal adopted recently said it would take raises of 9.5 per cent each year of the next biennium to accomplish this."[31]

Since any increase will not be enough local boards should allocate additional funds for forensics coaches ranging from $500 to $1,000 depending on education, experience and performance. This will reward the coaches who are already devoting much uncompensated extra-duty time to their speech and drama programs and should act as an incentive for other coaches to establish or improve programs at their schools. How many athletic coaches in the state work for a flat teaching fee?

4. Coaches must be relieved of all responsibilities outside the area of speech and theatre since they cannot devot adequate time if their attention is divided.

5. Coaches should become aware of the value of non-competitive speech festivals and utilize this form as an effective learning tool.

6. Either more participation should be encouraged in the National Thespian Society or a secondary school theatre interest group should be established to lend some direction and organization to dramatic programs in the state. The logical step, if it hasn't already been taken, is to make it an extension of the KACA. In any case, it will have to be supported to survive.

7. A more professional attitude needs to be adopted by all speech and dramatics directors in the state. The first step would be to take an active participation in the Kentucky Association of Communication Arts and the Kentucky High School Speech League. Wider participation should be encouraged in the NFL if rules between the two groups can be brought closer in line with practical use rather than technique.

8. Suggestions have been made to add several events to the tournament schedule next year.[32] Careful consideration must be given to the inclusion of any new events since many of those proposed are overlapping or duplicating areas already in existence. The league should concentrate on defining and improving current events before branching out into areas about which many coaches have little understanding. Readers Theatre should not be included until such time as coaches show more ability in the areas of material selection and arrangement, interpretation and production and until there is a broader base of understanding of this format for competent evaluation.

As the survey points out, there has been little general enthusiasm demonstrated for this form and there is still the basic question to be answered as to the desirability of competative interpretation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

1. A regional and state performance survey comparing a coaches' background, program and experience with actual performance and success.

2. A study of Kentucky's success in secondary forensics on the national level.

3. A study of job placement for graduating speech majors and minors, trying to determine what has happened to Kentucky's wealth of experienced speech teachers.

4. A study to determine the minimum factors needed for a successful speech program.

5. A study of current budgeting policies to determine reasonable arguments based on current practices for allocating additional funds for forensic activity.

6. A yearly study by the KHSSL to determine the success and progress of speech education in the state.

7. A compilation of sources and materials on all aspects of forensic competition including suggested readings.

8. A study to determine the feasibility of additional tournaments on the regional level at the beginning of the year as well as closer communication between individual coaches in each region.

FOOTNOTES

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